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the PANHANDLE National Grasslands

WORK FOR YOU!

NATIONAL FORESTS · Lands of many uses

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ● FOREST SERVICE ● SOUTHWESTERN REGION

MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT
of your
PANHANDLE National Grasslands
provides
• RECREATION
• WATER
• WOOD
• FORAGE
• WILDLIFE
for maximum overall
public benefit!

Welcome to the Panhandle National Grasslands. Here grassland agriculture has been established on former dustbowl areas and is under Multiple Use Management by the U. S. Department of Agriculture's land managing agency, the Forest Service. By words and pictures this brochure tells how we manage the resources of these lands — recreation, water, wildlife, forage, and wood for the benefit of the American people.

These 300,000 acres of rehabilitated lands are scattered from northeastern New Mexico and the Texas Panhandle through western Oklahoma to Fannin County, Texas. The resource management programs on the National Grasslands are geared to meet public needs, and the outdoor recreation, grass, oil and gas and other resources are becoming increasingly important to the economy of the communities adjacent to the Grasslands.

I urge all of you, as stockholders in these National Grasslands, to visit them often. The District Rangers and I welcome your questions about the Forest Service management of these lands, so please come in any time. While you are enjoying the National Grasslands we would appreciate your cooperation in helping to protect them and keep them clean.

David P. Stevens

Forest Supervisor

HISTORICAL

In 1960, a Secretary of Agriculture's Administrative order designated land utilization projects in the Great Plains as National Grasslands and directed that they be administered for outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed and wildlife and fish purposes. The action made these lands an integral part of the National Forest system and assured that the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service would manage their several resources for maximum overall public benefit.

These prairie lands were settled originally under the Homestead laws, and bumper wheat harvests resulted from the first tilling of the prairie. Word of an agricultural bonanza spread, enticing more and more families to migrate from the South and Middle West. To make room for the large number of settlers the land was divided into smaller and smaller tracts, many of them too small to support the farm family as an economic unit.

By 1938, successive years of cropping, a prolonged drouth and strong winds left the land denuded. The nationwide depression added to the problem. Farm families moved further west and abandoned developed farmsteads by the hundreds. Top-soil which had produced outstanding yields of wheat and cotton had been picked up and blown east by prevailing winds, even as far as Washington, D. C., and on to the decks of ships 300 miles offshore. Then when the rains did come, they raced through the remaining topsoil to form gullies up to 40 feet deep. Nothing was left to slow down the runoff.

Tax delinquencies developed and local community leaders turned to the federal government for help. Congress authorized the purchase of these lands under the Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, the Emergency Relief Act of 1935, and Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of 1937.

• **Typical "dustbowl" scene in the 1930's.**

In 1938, the Soil Conservation Service began rehabilitation with the planting of pasture grasses, restricted grazing on virgin range, and building flood control structures. Special treatment was instituted to bring back wildlife food and cover, and large earthen dams were built to impound water for recreation and agricultural uses.

The administrative responsibility for these land utilization projects was transferred from the Soil Conservation Service to the Forest Service, the U. S. Department of Agriculture's land managing organization, in 1953, and they were first attached to the Cibola National Forest. In 1958, the Panhandle Forest Unit was established at Amarillo, Texas; and in 1960, the name was changed to the Panhandle National Grasslands which include the Kiowa, Rita Blanca, Black Kettle, Cross Timbers, Caddo, and McClellan Creek National Grasslands. A District Ranger is in charge of managing each Grassland for maximum utilization of the resources in the public interest.

• **Good grassland managment has made these lands productive again.**

WATER

The goal of watershed management on the Panhandle National Grasslands is to produce water which feeds underground water tables and flows into reservoirs at a pace which does not disturb the soil. This means stabilizing watersheds to prevent a repeat of the large floods of a few years ago on the Canadian, Red, Washita, and Trinity Rivers.

Erosion control structures have been built and gully plugs installed to help slow down damaging runoff, and grass has been reseeded where wind erosion caused "blow-holes." In 1963 a special treatment was developed on one district to stabilize areas still subject to wind erosion; in order to establish grass, seed was drilled and a water base asphalt emulsion sprayed on the soil to hold it in place while the seed germinated.

Watershed management on the Panhandle in the next 10 years (1963-1972) is a $1.2 million dollar program. The Panhandle needs 2354 small erosion control dams, 102 miles of diversion terraces, 263 acres of seeding and 150 acres of blow-hole stabilization.

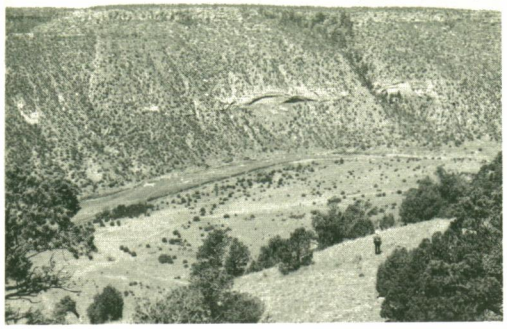
The Forest Service and the Soil Conservation Service have cooperated in demonstrating good soil and water conservation practices which could be applied on adjoining private lands.

These and other programs will help heal past damage to the land, but the big job will be to protect and improve the entire Grasslands by proper use of all the resources — by intensive, controlled grazing management, by prevention of wildfire, and by careful location and construction of roads and other improvements. Good resource management is the real key to the production of quality water.

• **Recovery is slow in some of the deep arroyos in the Cross Timbers National Grassland.**

• **A protective mulch is spread over areas disturbed by oil wells and pipelines.**

• **Man-made Lake Fannin helps control one of the Red River tributary watersheds.**

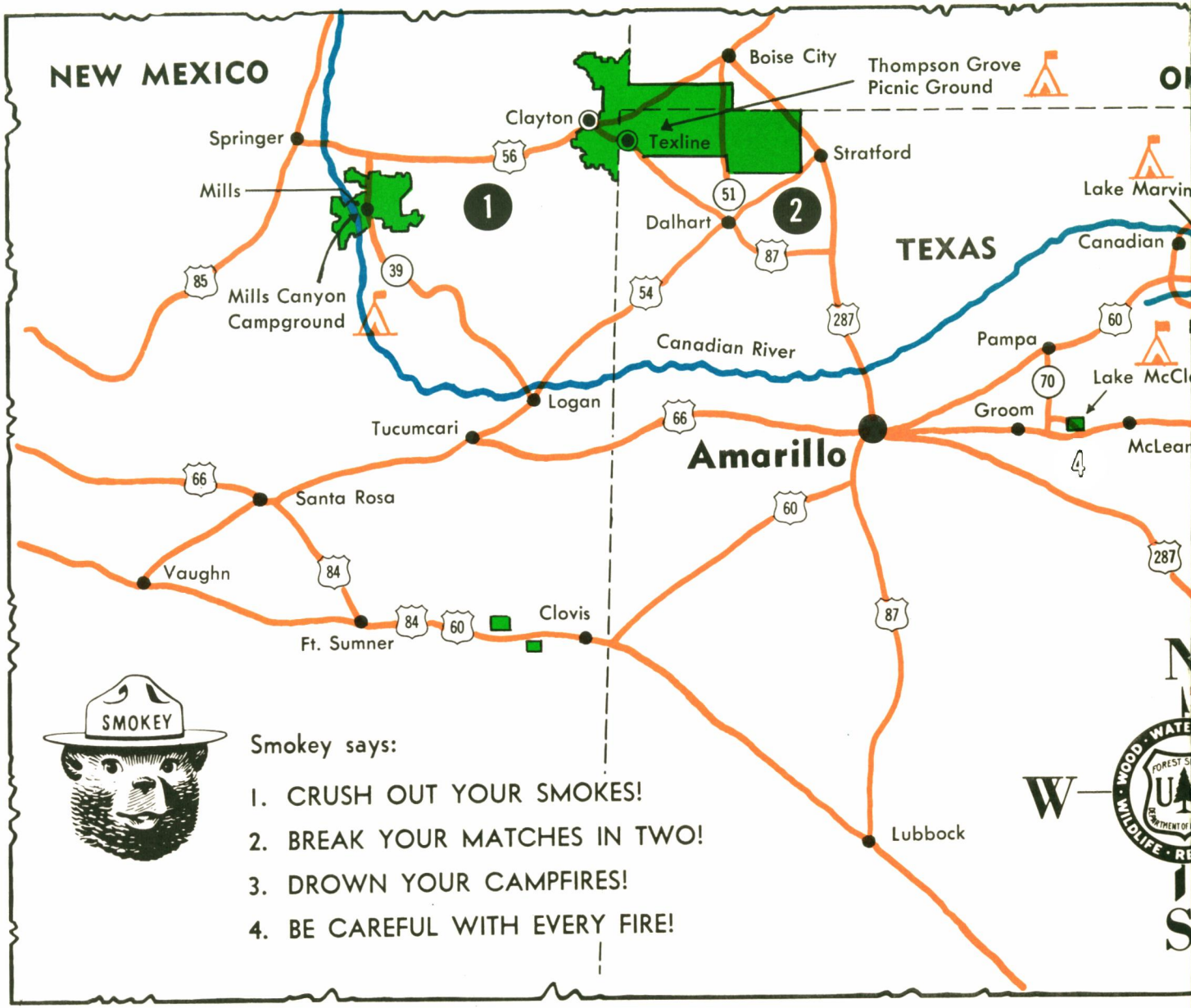


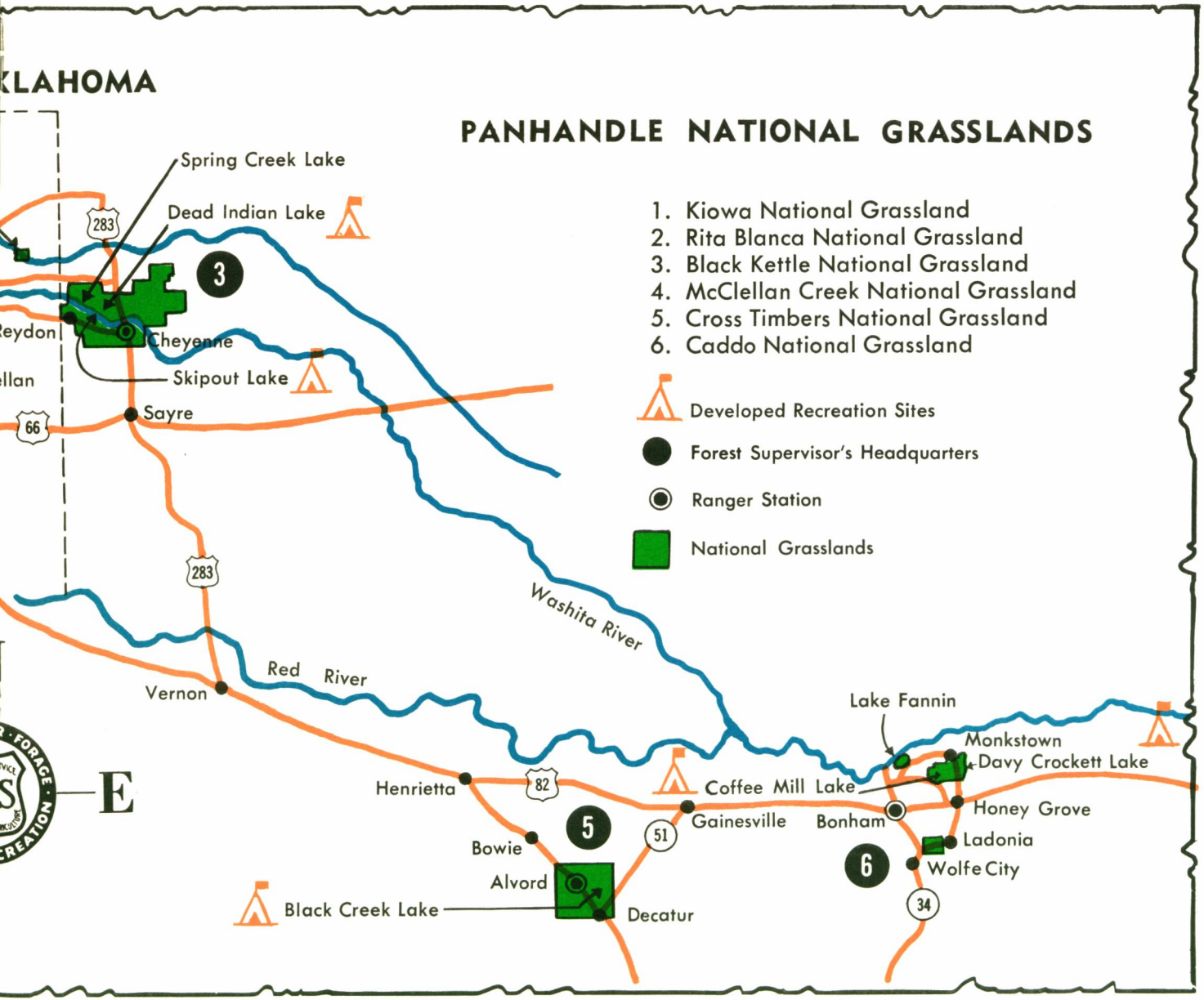
1 Canadian River Canyon — Kiowa National Grassland.

2 A Rita Blanca National Grassland pasture.

3 Lake Marvin — Black Kettle National Grassland.

PANHANDLE National Grasslands





4 **Water sports on Lake McClellan.**

5 **Black Creek — Cross Timbers National Grassland.**

6 **Red River Valley — Caddo National Grassland.**

• **Campers enjoying the cool shade at Dead Indian Campground.**

• **Everyone has fun at the lakes on the Panhandle National Grasslands.**

OUTDOOR RECRECREATION

Nine lakes have been impounded on the Panhandle National Grasslands as part of their rehabilitation from dustbowl to grassland agriculture. These provide opportunities in otherwise dry plains areas for Americans to engage in water sports of all kinds — fishing, boating, swimming, and water skiing.

The Panhandle has constructed new recreational facilities and improved the standard of existing camp and picnic grounds at seven of these lakes — Marvin, McClellan, Davy Crockett, Black Creek, and Coffee Mill in Texas and Skipout and Dead Indian in Oklahoma. Spring Creek Lake near Cheyenne, Oklahoma, is scheduled for future development. In addition, Mills Canyon Campground and Thompson Grove Recreation Area provide shaded picnic and campsites which help satisfy the ever-growing demand.

A 10-year plan (1963-1972) has been written for development of the Panhandle National Grasslands. In its first year, rehabilitation work was completed on the dams at Lakes Davy Crockett and Fannin at a cost of more than $200,000, and six additional family units were built at Davy Crockett Lake. The 20-unit McDowell picnic ground has been started at Lake McClellan and rehabilitation of the dam and spillway there will get underway in the summer of 1964.

Visits to the lakes have decreased in recent years because of low water levels. The dam rehabilitation will correct this situation and the Panhandle National Grasslands looks for recreation visits to soar in the next few years. A total of 169,800 were recorded in 1963.

THE NATIONAL GRASSLANDS

America's Playgrounds

WILDLIFE

Hunting and fishing are popular uses of the wildlife resource on the Panhandle National Grasslands. The entire 300,000 acres in the three states — New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma — are open to the public under state hunting and fishing regulations except for 7000 acres in a quail habitat study area near Texline, Texas, which are closed to hunting at the present time. In 1963, almost 2,000 hunters came in search of big game — antelope, deer, barbary sheep and turkey — and 6900 hunted small game. Included in the latter tally are hundreds of bird dog owners and fanciers who attend the state and regional field trials held near Alvord on the Cross Timbers Grassland.

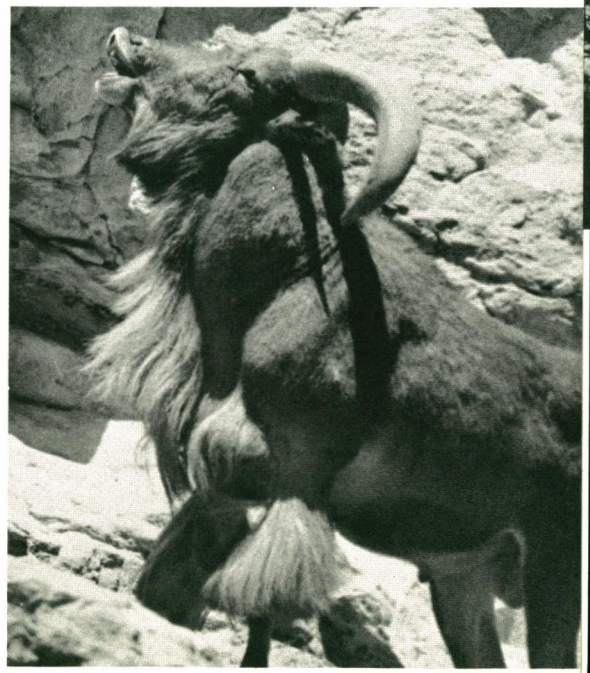
Wildlife habitat — food and cover for birds and animals — is the responsibility of the Forest Service. The Panhandle cooperates with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, to keep wildlife numbers in balance with available habitat and maintain healthy populations.

Twenty-five thousand fishing visits were recorded in 1963. Public facilities for fishing are extremely limited throughout the Panhandle and the nine lakes on the National Grasslands are greatly appreciated by residents. Cooperative studies with the state agencies have led to markedly improved fishing. Where needed, undesirable species were removed and the lakes restocked with game fish.

During 1963 improvements in the range and watershed resources were planned to enhance the wildlife habitat. Fences were built to protect shelter belts, and escape ramps for small animals and birds were installed in stock waters. These projects will continue and a $79,000 planned program will include planting of food and cover on 184 acres, fencing wildlife plots to protect habitat on 240 acres, development of waterfowl habitat on 30 acres, building 11 deer salt licks, and signing of National Grasslands boundaries to identify these areas open to the public for free hunting.

• **A day in the field with a good bird dog.**

• **Isn't that a nice one?**



• **The Barbary sheep — a new game animal in the Canadian Canyon.**

• **Drilling grass seed to help stabilize a "blow-hole".**

• **One of the Caddo Grassland pastures.**

RANGE

In 1963, nearly 14,000 cattle owned by 297 local ranchers utilized the forage grown on the Panhandle National Grasslands. Use of this resource has been increased through the years as the soil fertility built up and grass stands were established. Once again dustbowl lands are contributing to the economy of the counties in which they are located.

Since the late 1930's the range revegetation and improvement program has accomplished seeding of native grasses on 159,400 acres of formerly cultivated fields and treatment of 600 acres for noxious plant control. In 1963, the job included building 10.5 miles of fence, replacing 10 towers and windmills, drilling 1 well, replacing 6 stock tanks, developing 2 earthen stock tanks, treatment of 100 acres to control prairie dogs, treatment of 2,000 acres to control shinnery oak and yucca, hand removal of juniper on 350 acres, contour ditching 600 acres, and seeding on 565 acres.

Much still remains to be done. This past year was the first in a 10-year development plan which has programmed $1.4 million for range improvements. Included are 4,720 acres of revegetation, 5040 acres of pitting and reseeding, 51,355 acres of noxious plant control, construction of 1157 miles of fence, drilling of 175 wells, construction of 194 windmills and the building of 96 stock tanks.

Permittees pay an annual fee for the grazing of cattle on the National Grasslands based on the number of animal months used. In 1963 this amounted to $116,704.70 of which 25 percent was returned to the counties containing Grassland acreage to be used for roads and schools within each county.

• **Doesn't this look better than a sand dune?**

• **National Grassland boundary sign.**

• **An oil well near Alvord.**

SPECIAL USES

More than 230 special land use permits have been issued for roads, oil pipelines, power lines, organization sites, resorts, telephone lines, cemeteries, and sites for oil and gas drilling on the Panhandle National Grasslands, while an additional 65 sites are under oil and gas lease.

Approximately 45 oil and gas wells are active. On some of the areas, the minerals were reserved by individuals at the time the land was purchased by the government. Where the mineral rights were assigned to the government, oil companies pay a royalty for the removal of the natural resource. In 1963 this amounted to more than $22,000 or approximately 16 percent of the total receipts for all uses. By law, 25 percent of all receipts from National Forests and Grasslands are returned to the counties in which these lands are located to be spent on county schools and roads.

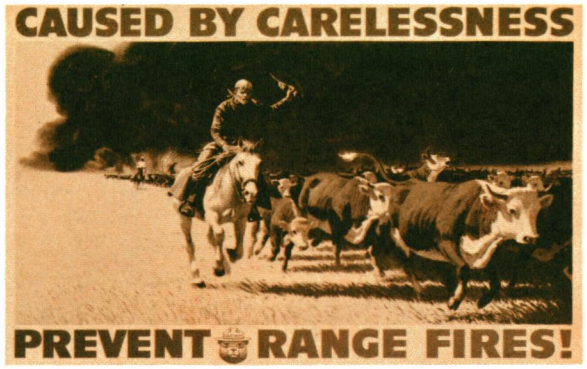
As with other activities on the Panhandle, the demands are increasing as the population expansion gives rise to additional public services, but through experience, land managers know that the country is primarily suited to grassland agriculture. Consequently, each new application for a special use is evaluated to determine if it is compatible, and if not, the application must be modified or be denied.

• **Proof that pine trees can be grown on the Caddo National Grassland.**

TIMBER

Most of the Panhandle National Grasslands is suitable only for grassland agriculture which includes the planting of windbreaks or small groves for wildlife cover and landscaping of recreation sites. However, on the Caddo and Cross Timbers National Grasslands the growing of commercial timber is seen as a distinct possibility. Experience with a 1938 pine planting has indicated that tree farming may be profitable if large enough areas can be converted to timber to justify the establishment of local wood products industries.

In the spring of 1963, for the first time since 1938, seedlings were set out on both National Grasslands — 15 acres on Cross Timbers and 30 acres on Caddo. The 10-year plan provides for reforestation of 4500 acres on the two Grasslands. Pine will be used in the program's initial phase with hardwood planting scheduled as soon as seed can be collected from native trees.

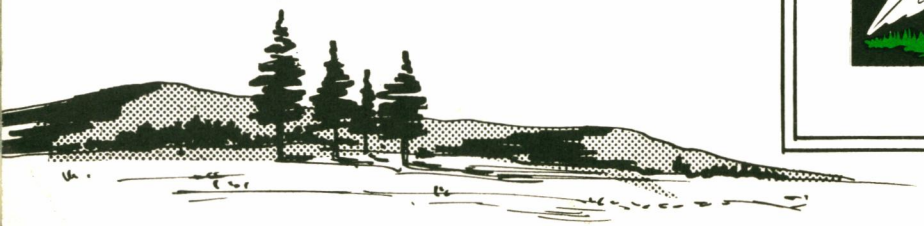


FIRE

Wildfires on the Panhandle National Grasslands are mostly man-caused. In 1963, 18 of the 19 wildfires were the result of man's carelessness.

Public education through extensive signing, public speaking engagements, newspaper articles, radio and television appeals, and meetings with users is the long term goal of fire prevention. Railroads, a constant fire potential because of sparks from "hot boxes" and exhaust stacks, have been contacted in order to work out a more effective prevention program along rights-of-way.

Past cooperation with local fire departments, users and interested neighbors has been and continues to be excellent. Rural and community fire departments are active in suppression work on both public and private lands within their district. The Panhandle reimburses these organizations for time and expense incurred while suppressing fires on the National Grasslands.



Colorful four color decals, bumper strips, and a recreation folder map which contains general information about the Panhandle National Grasslands and a map showing their locations are available at the Forest Supervisor's office in the Barfield Building, Amarillo, Texas, and at District Ranger Stations in Clayton, New Mexico, Texline, Decatur, and Bonham, Texas, and Cheyenne, Oklahoma.